831 881 and of the hippopotamus are by no means poetic descriptions of these big animals similar to those contained in the book of Job. The first alludes to the manner in which the male crocodile copulates with his female. And the second tells the story of a virgin girl whom the young boys violate in order to open the way to the grown up men who will follow them. Impure allusions are found everywhere in this teaching of the circumcision school.

When the instructor has finished, he lifts his stick with a certain gesture and all the boys shout at once: "Zithari!" Viguet told me that that exclamation meant: "They are as long as that" and that it was an obscene allusion. The old men take great delight in being flattered and, if the boys wish to add to their pleasure, they will say: "When you spit, the wind from your mouth would kill enemies at the other end of the country!"

As is plain from these quotations, the teaching of the Ngoma is quite trivial, and the formulae are rather a collection of esoteric words than a true intellectual training.

533 881 *The songs* of the Ngoma have no deeper meaning. We have seen already the song of the Elephant and of the Winter-bird... Every morning, just after they wake, the circumcised sing for a long time the following words, which they repeat also when coming back from hunting trips.

Sing your song, bird of the morn
Mafé-é-é-é!

The melody is rude, wild but very impressive. Mafé-é-é-é must mean: "We are the initiated, we are the men!"

224 881 868 *Hunting.* Hunting is the only useful thing taught in the Ngoma. Boys go almost every day to the velt and become very clever in catching game. They beat the bush, sometimes climb hills and chase all the game to the top, killing it there with their assagais, knobkerries, etc. Near Shiluvane they even attack the Mamotsuiri mountain once during their three months. All the men of the country are summoned to take part in the big expedition, which requires real strategic skill.

881 To sum up the rites of this marginal period of the Circumcision school, this is the programme of a day in the sungi. The shepherds

954 862 (see page 48.) After her birth she is carried in the skin of a gazelle (mhunti) which her mother ties round her neck and loins. When that skin has become too small, they get one of an antelope (mhala). She begins to walk ; when her mother sends her on an errand she is able to do it. She also begins to talk, and to know her father and mother. Then, when she has grown, they prepare for her a small pot of pounded and cooked mealies so that she may eat of it. After three years she is weaned and goes to stay for a time with her grandmother. After that she returns home.

857 868 "When she has learnt to walk, she is very fond of playing with the shells of the sala. She cooks in them. Then, when she has done with them, she takes small pots and cooks little dinners. She also gets a small calabash, she goes to the lake to draw water and, on coming back, she gives it to her father so that he may wash his face. Here she is now gathering small bits of wood ; she makes small bundles of them and brings them home. Later on she will make heavier bundles.

"When she has grown up more, she will take charge of the work of her mother. She will do the work. But if the mother sees that she cannot do it all, she will help her. It may however be said that the mother needs no longer to crush her mealies, 583 neither to go to the well nor to the fireplace. When she is quite a grown up girl, the suitors come. If they are accepted, they bring the purchase money. They buy her (lobola) and do all they like. If she is prolific, she will bear many children. Now and then she returns to her parents' village, then she comes back to her husband. Her children grow. They go to get water, to cut her wood, to plough her fields. She goes with them. When they are 462 grown up, they get married. If amongst them there is a son, he goes to buy his wife. Thus she looks for a mother-in-law for her son. He will then be truly a man because he has got a mother-in-law! When her children are married, the mother again begins to do all her work. She steeps her mealies, crushes them to make flour, she cuts her wood, cooks her beer ; she prepares the light beer ; she smears the floor of her hut ; this is what she does till she is quite old.

888 "When she is quite old, they feed her. Her grandchildren are

1 [The following page is quoted from an essay by a native girl at the Swiss Mission school at Lourenço Marques -- Analyst]

888 sent to bring her food. When they are hungry, they stop on the way and eat it themselves. On their return they say: 'We have indeed given it to her.' In the morning they put a stick in her hand and help her to get out of her hut, so that she can warm herself in the sun.

"Then when the Ronga woman is quite old she begins to see no more and to hear no more. She falls into second childhood. All she does is to complain and to say, crying, that she is ill treated. And this is the end!"

The girl who wrote this essay was but emerging from childhood, and has consequently enlarged more especially upon the first phase of the life. The life of a woman is not very different from that of a man at that stage. Differences however come in later on, and we shall have to add some important facts relating to the fate of women before marriage, during the conjugal life, and in widowhood.

A. BEFORE MARRIAGE

I. *The Girls' games.*

857 324 868 864 As we have seen from the essay of the schoolgirl, Ronga girls imitate the doings of their mothers, their cooking, their gathering of fuel, etc., just as the boys imitate the fighting and hunting of the men. They also play with *dolls*, nursing them as they see the women nursing babies. These dolls are called *vule*. The origin of the game is as follows. A little girl asks her mother who is carrying a younger child on her shoulders: Mother, where did you find your baby? — Oh! I found it in the bush (ntlhaben). — Please bring me one also, mother. — All right!— Next day the mother plucks a sala in the bush, removes all the stones inside it, lets it dry and fixes it to the end of a stick. She pierces the upper part of the sphere, passes bits of string through the holes to imitate hair, smears them with ochre, ties a little clothing round

of the coast, antelopes leave well marked traces in the soil. A hunter starts at 8 a. m. and notices that the footprint is of a dark colour ; this shows that the morning dew has fallen into it ; therefore the footprint was made during the night, some hours before. If the edges of the print are sharply cut, this means that the animal passed in the early morning, when the sand was still a little wet and firm, whilst if the edges are irregular or have crumbled down, it is a sign that the print was made at noon, when the sand is quite dry and loose. The Rev. A. Aubert living in the Maputju country, who often questioned hunters on the subject, told me that these men had wonderful skill in drawing their conclusions at a glance, apparently without any reasoning process. It is evident that the reasoning process must have taken place at some period, but it has become almost instinctive : the sight of the footprint immediately gives the hunter the information required. They are even able, when on the track of two antelopes of the same kind, to state which are the footprints of the male and which those of the female, the latter being generally somewhat smaller.

When the soil is hard, or clayish, there may be more difficulty. The hunter will observe the depth of the footprint ; if it is deeply marked, this shows that the earth was wet and soft when the animal passed ; therefore it was in the early morning, just after the fall of the dew. Or he may notice that a stone has been displaced and turned upside down by the antelope's hoofs ; should the upper side of this stone be wet, the displacement took place before the dew fell. On the contrary, should it be dry, the stone has just been moved and the animal is not far off. The Rev. P. Resset, who was once led in an eland hunt by an experienced "phisa", told me that the man was all the time muttering volubly, talking to himself in a low voice, interpreting to himself all the signs he observed and drawing his conclusions without taking any heed of his white companion (1).

(1) Native children begin very early to learn the science of footprints. They notice the peculiar aspect of the footprint of all the inmates of the village and are soon able to recognize them. They even connect them with their respective ways of walking, which is indicated by the footprints being turned more or less outwards.